

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 0548

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, XM, PA

SUBJECT: PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT REACTION TO ELECTION OF
JULIO ETCHEVERRY AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF ORIT

1. FOLLOWING SHORT NEWS ACCOUNT FEBRUARY 5 OF ELECTION OF JULIO ETCHEVERRY ESPINOLA TO POST OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERAMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ORIT) AT THE 8TH CONGRESS HELD RECENTLY IN CUERNAVACA, MEXICO, LOCAL PRESS CARRIED A REPORT ON FEBRUARY 11 OF A TELEGRAM FROM ETCHEVERRY TO PRESIDENT STROESSNER EXPRESSING HIS COOPERATION WITH THE GOP UPON ASSUMING HIS NEW POST. ETCHEVERRY, A PARAGUAYAN NATIONAL WHO HAS LIVED IN EXILE DURING THE PAST 18 YEARS, HAS BEEN AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF THE STROESSNER REGIME AND THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PARAGUAYAN LABOR FEDERATION (CPT).

2. ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES IN THE PARAGUAYAN MINISTRY OF LABOR, ETCHEVERRY IN HIS TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT STROESSNER ALSO REQUESTED PERMISSION TO RETURN TO PARAGUAY FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, MINISTER OF LABOR SAUL GONZALEZ AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE PARAGUAYAN LABOR FEDERATION WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AT THE ELECTION OF
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ETCHEVERRY AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF RIT AND HAVE PRIVATELY

EXPRESSED THEIR ANNOYANCE THAT A WELL-KNOWN POLITICAL EXILE WAS ELECTED TO THAT IMPORTANT POST. NO DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED YET BY THE GOP AS TO WHETHER ETCHEVERRY WILL BE GRANTED PERMISSION TO RETURN TO PARAGUAY, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE CONCILIATORY TONE OF HIS TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT STROESSNER AND A SIMILIAR ONE ADDRESSED TO THE HEAD OF THE PARAGUAYAN LABOR FEDERATION, MAY PERSUADE PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES TO ACCEDE TO THE REQUEST IN CONSIDERATION OF HIS NEW OFFICIAL STATUS. PRESUMABLY IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED, HIS VISIT WILL BE LIMITED IN TIME AND TO OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS ONLY WITH THE PROBABLY EXCEPTION OF PERMISSION TO VISIT HIS AGED MOTHER WHOM HE HAS NOT SEEN FOR 18 YEARS.

COMMENT: DESPITE GOP ANNOYANCE AT ETCHEVERRY'S ELECTION, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT ANTICIPATE ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN ORIT AND THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT OR PARAGUAYAN LABOR FEDERATION.

RICHARDSON

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